

The attempt to crystallize social morality in an objective discipline was possible only in a theocracy ; and, still eloquent in speech, theocracy had abdicated in fact, even before the sons of Belial returned to cut down its groves and lay waste its holy places. In an age when the right to dissent from the State Church was still not fully established, its defeat was fortunate, for it was the victory of tolerance. It meant, however, that the discipline of the Church gave place to the attempt to promote reform through the action of the State, which reached its height in the Barebones Parliament. Projects for law reform, marriage reform and financial reform, the reform of prisons and the relief of debtors, jostled each other on its committees ; while outside it there were murmurs among radicals against social and economic privilege, which were not to be heard again till the days of the Chartists, and which to the conservative mind of Cromwell seemed to portend mere anarchy. The transition from the idea of a moral code enforced by the Church, which had been characteristic of early Calvinism, to the economic individualism of the later Puritan movement took place, in fact, by way of the democratic agitation of the Independents. Abhorring the whole mechanism of ecclesiastical discipline and compulsory conformity,

they endeavoured to achieve the same social and ethical ends by political action.

The change was momentous- If the English Social Democratic movement has any single source, that source is to be found in the New Model Army. But the conception implied in the attempt to formulate a scheme of economic ethics—the theory that every department of life falls beneath the same all-encompassing arch of religion—was too deeply rooted to be exorcised merely by political changes, or even by the more corroding march of economic development. Expelled from the world of fact, where it had always been a stranger and a sojourner, it survived in the world